

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 10-13 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationships of elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants note that this rejection was previously raised by the Examiner in the Office Action of October 7, 1999. In the amendment dated April 7, 2000, applicants presented arguments with regard to this rejection. In the Office Action dated June 16, 2000, the Examiner stated that the amendment of April 7, 2000, was sufficient to withdraw the §112 rejections. Accordingly, applicants again respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw these rejections for the very reasons presented in our Amendment of April 7, 2000.

Claims 1-20, 22-26, 35, 37-40, 49, and 51 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Henn et al. in view of Lumb. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Again, applicants submit that this rejection was previously raised and overcome by applicants. Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the Office Action of February 27, 2001, wherein the Examiner rejected then claims 16 and 20 as being obvious over Henn et al. in view of Lumb. In an amendment dated August 15, 2002, applicants presented arguments and amendments to the claims. In the subsequent Office Action dated December 16, 2002, the Examiner withdrew the rejections based on Henn et al. in view of Lumb.

Applicants submit that the presently rejected claims have only been narrowed since the original rejection was withdrawn. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider this rejection in view of the previous arguments and the Examiner's own admission that the previous arguments were sufficient to withdraw this rejection.

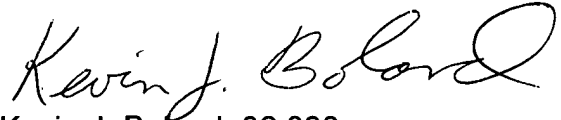
Finally, applicants submit that the Examiner's reliance on *In re Spada* is misplaced. Applicants submit that *In re Spada* cannot be applied to an obviousness rejection, as the holding in *In re Spada* was directed to an anticipation rejection. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that this rejection should be withdrawn.

The remaining claims were rejected as being unpatentable over Henn and Lumb as applied above, and further in view of Wu et al. Applicants submit that this rejection must fail as well, for the reasons stated above.

In view of the above comments, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance directed toward claims 1-26, 35, 37-43, 49, and 51.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to telephone Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin J. Boland". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and address.

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